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On the Hunt: The History of Deer Hunting in Wisconsin

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Horsman richly describes specific foodways and dietary changes in the West, but he provides no framework for using food to look at broader social and cultural meanings. It is clear in the narrative that food brought people of many social, cultural, ethnic, racial, and economic backgrounds together. Horsman does a good job describing those interactions, but some readers might appreciate an interpretive approach to the topic. In addition, the treatment of women overlooks the voluminous literature on the centrality of women in the production of food. Horsman repeatedly recognizes the importance of butter and cheese as valued commodities, typically produced by women, but, for example, he indicates that the sale of butter created “pocket money” for women (13). For more than 30 years now, scholars of frontier and rural women’s history have recognized the importance of butter production for bringing cash into the household. Horsman gives voice to women’s perspectives and notes that they could differ from men’s perspectives. The section on Susan Magoffin’s experience traveling on the Santa Fe Trail is one such example (118–22). Still, in many ways, in spite of the large number of women’s sources consulted, *Feast and Famine* is a masculine rendition of foodways on the frontier and in the West. This is partly because major sections of the book are devoted to exploration, the fur trade, the Gold Rush, the military, and ranching. The food history of the frontier and American West would seem to be an ideal place for addressing gender and challenges to gender ideals, but Horsman misses that opportunity.

Although the narrative is a bit repetitious at times, especially when discussing hunting in the West, overall *Feast and Famine* tells an engaging and important story, one that is highly readable. The volume includes a wonderful selection of primary source material, especially diaries, journals, and memoirs available in print, and the use of footnotes should be applauded. The choice of images greatly enhances the text. Indeed, the role of women in food production is in many ways more forcefully articulated in the images than in the text. For people interested in westward migration, women’s history, foodways, and food history on the frontier and in the American West, *Feast and Famine* is a book general readers and scholars alike will enjoy.

On the Hunt: The History of Deer Hunting in Wisconsin, by Robert C. Willging. Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2008. xxv, 292 pp. Illustrations, notes, maps, sidebars, appendix, index. \$26.95 cloth.

Reviewer Gordon O. Hendrickson is retired State Archivist for the State Historical Society of Iowa. He is an enthusiastic, but not so accomplished, Wisconsin deer hunter.

Whitetail deer hunting is a long-standing tradition for many in Wisconsin and throughout the nation. Robert Willging explores the relationship between human and animal through the ages from earliest time to the twenty-first century. Using many published and near-print sources, Willging is especially skillful in exploiting northern Wisconsin's local newspapers to extract information on the value of hunters and hunting to the economy of the area and to evaluate local reaction to policies of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

After market hunters decimated Wisconsin's whitetail herd in the nineteenth century, the DNR strove to achieve a balance between available resources and the number of deer. Hunters and the DNR often had conflicting views on how best to restore and ultimately control the state's deer herd, and Willging documents those disagreements. He reviews hunters' reactions to DNR policies such as length and timing of the hunting season and determination of animals eligible for taking (bucks or does). He also assesses the impact of Wisconsin's economic growth, especially the lumber industry in northern Wisconsin, on the deer herd and describes the evolution of the hunter from subsistence hunter to market hunter to sportsman and conservationist, with a brief look at Native American hunting methods and the value of the whitetail to native cultures.

Willging is at his best when exploring the importance of deer hunting for the deer hunter. He writes of the importance of the deer camp as a retreat, the attachment of hunters to their equipment, and their hunting techniques. He highlights his study with sidebar stories of individual hunters, deer camps, women and hunting, the economic impact of hunting, and law enforcement.

This history of deer hunting in Wisconsin is appealing on two levels. First, it is an interesting study of an activity often viewed from the individual or family perspective. Hunting, especially for modern hunters, is a personal opportunity to spend time in the woods as an individual or as part of a family. Willging expands that perspective so the individual experience is better understood as part of a larger activity. Second, Willging provides an overview of the state's efforts to manage a state resource — initially how to save that resource from total decimation to the present-day attempts to stabilize the deer population so it can thrive on available resources while addressing concerns with chronic wasting disease and overpopulation in urban and suburban areas.

In the final analysis, this is an interesting and informative read, a good blend of personal, local history set against a backdrop of serious conservation efforts at the state level.

Welsh Americans: A History of Assimilation in the Coalfields, by Ronald L. Lewis. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008. x, 395 pp. Illustrations, maps, tables, notes, bibliography, index. \$49.95 cloth.

Reviewer Ron Roberts is professor emeritus of sociology at the University of Northern Iowa. He is the author of *John L. Lewis: Hard Labor and Wild Justice* (1994) and editor of *Iowa's Ethnic Roots* (1993).

Ronald Lewis's *Welsh Americans* is the culmination of a lifetime's study of a people on the move to preserve or improve their ways of living. Lewis's earlier work has often focused on the struggles of Appalachian peoples to survive and to build lasting communities. This latest work by Lewis is a product of his training as a historian as well as his personal experience as the descendant of generations of Welsh miners.

The nineteenth-century Welsh miners who came to this country brought two contradictory skills and attitudes with them. They came largely from the south of Wales, where miners' lives were cheap and unions were a necessary weapon against starvation and unsafe conditions in the coal mines. They brought their unionism and radicalism with them to this country, but they also brought mining skills and knowledge to the American collieries, which gave many of them the ability to move into supervisory jobs on the side of management.

Lewis helps us untangle the miasma of ethnic and class struggles in turn-of-the-century coal country. He cites several conflicts between Irish and Welsh miners. Irish miners were willing to work for less than the Welsh, so mine bosses often used them to break miners' solidarity in strikes in Pennsylvania, Illinois, and Ohio. Lewis's carefully detailed portraits of such conflicts illuminate the contradictions and nuances of these struggles for self-interested justice. One cannot help but be moved by the Welsh miners' struggles with hunger and safety concerns in the mines.

Perhaps Lewis's most singular contribution is his integration of the biographies of Welsh immigrants with the larger demographic and economic forces impelling their actions. He includes various Welsh captains of the American coal industry as well as many Welshmen who moved from the labor force to the managerial side.

Unlike their rural brethren who created Welsh farming communities, Welsh coal miners did little to preserve their ancient language. They were far more likely to adapt the English of their coworkers as